

What is claimed is:

1. A method for reducing signaling load in a communication network having a plurality of switches, said method comprising the steps of:
 - a) receiving notification of a network event;
 - b) identifying a plurality of circuits affected by said network event;
 - c) grouping affected circuits in accordance with one or more end-switches to which a plurality of signaling messages have to be sent; and
 - d) bundling said plurality of signaling messages.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
 - e) forwarding said bundled signaling messages to one of said plurality of switches.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein said forwarding step e) forwards said bundled signaling messages in at least one signaling packet.
4. The method of claim 2, wherein said forwarding step e) forwards said bundled signaling messages for circuits with a common end switch.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein said signaling messages are release messages.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein said steps b) and c) are performed prior to said reception of said network event, and where results of performing said steps b) and c) are stored for a plurality of network events.
7. The method of claim 4, wherein said forwarding step e) forwards said bundled signaling messages for circuits with a common end switch along a common path.
8. An apparatus for reducing signaling load in a communication network having a plurality of switches, said apparatus comprising:

a controller for receiving notification of a network, and for identifying a plurality of circuits affected by said network event, and for grouping affected circuits in accordance with one or more end-switches to which a plurality of signaling messages have to be sent, and for bundling said plurality of signaling messages.

9. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein said controller forwards said bundled signaling messages to one of said plurality of switches.

10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein said bundled signaling messages are forwarded for circuits with a common end switch.

11. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a plurality of instructions, the plurality of instructions including instructions which, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to perform the steps comprising of:

- a) receiving notification of a network event;
- b) identifying a plurality of circuits affected by said network event;
- c) grouping affected circuits in accordance with one or more end-switches to which a plurality of signaling messages have to be sent; and
- d) bundling said plurality of signaling messages.

12. A method for reducing signaling load in a communication network having a plurality of switches, said method comprising the steps of:

- a) receiving a plurality of release messages for releasing resources associated with at least one circuit;
- b) deallocating resources held by said at least one circuit; and
- c) grouping said at least one circuit in accordance with a destination switch for restoration.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of:

- d) providing a delay for allowing the receipt of said plurality of release messages.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of:
 - e) starting a restoration method.
15. The method of claim 12, wherein said grouping step c) groups said at least one circuit in accordance with a destination switch along a common path for restoration.
16. A method for reducing signaling load in a communication network having a plurality of switches, said method comprising the steps of:
 - a) selecting a list of circuits to be restored;
 - b) calculating at least one path for said list of circuits;
 - c) grouping one or more circuits within said list of circuits in accordance with one or more common routes to which a plurality of setup messages have to be sent; and
 - d) bundling said plurality of setup messages.
17. The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of:
 - e) forwarding said bundled setup messages to one of said plurality of switches.
18. The method of claim 16, wherein said selecting step a) selects said list of circuits to be restored based upon a class priority.
19. A method for reducing signaling load in a communication network having a plurality of switches, said method comprising the steps of:
 - a) receiving a bundle of setup messages for setting up a plurality of circuits;
 - b) determining whether resources are available for each of said plurality of circuits;
 - c) allocating said resources to each of said plurality of circuits, where circuits allocated with resources are considered to be accepted circuits; and
 - d) bundling a plurality of signaling messages for said accepted circuits.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of:
e) forwarding said bundled signaling messages to one of said plurality of switches.
21. The method of claim 19, wherein said bundling step d) bundles a plurality of setup messages for said accepted circuits.
22. The method of claim 19, wherein circuits without allocated resources are considered rejected circuits.
23. The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of:
e) bundling a plurality of signaling messages for said rejected circuits.
24. The method of claim 23, wherein said bundling step e) bundles a plurality of release messages for said rejected circuits.
25. The method of claim 19, wherein said bundling step d) bundles a plurality of connect messages for said accepted circuits.